



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 1, February 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

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The Governor's Council on Disability has had a very busy and eventful year in 2017, and is looking forward to another successful and productive year in 2018. The [Annual Report](#) was completed in December 2017 and summarizes all of GCD's activities. The Annual Report is posted online at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/annualreports.htm>

Since the beginning of the year, GCD staff has been working on continuing its programs—the Legislative Update, Legislative Education Project, the Inclusion, Youth Leadership and Website/IT Awards programs, and the planning and preparation for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum.

The [Legislative Update](#) is a weekly newsletter that summarizes bills that may affect people with disabilities if they are signed into laws. To subscribe to the newsletter, you may contact Laura Mueth at laura.mueth@oa.mo.gov or by phone at 573-751-2600.

For individuals who are interested in learning about the legislative process in Missouri and how to become more active in creating positive public policies for people with disabilities, the [Legislative Education Project](#) website offers educational modules and videos. For more in depth training, an organization may request LEP training at the Capitol or on site at their organization by contacting Laura at laura.mueth@oa.mo.gov. The in person training is scheduled based on availability and number of participants.

The GCD has received several outstanding nominations for the 2017 [Inclusion, Youth Leadership, and Website/IT](#) Awards. The judges (Council members and state liaisons) are in the process of reviewing all nominations and determining the winners. We will present the awards to the winners at the Power Up Conference in Columbia on April 17.

GCD staff is continuing to provide Disability 101 presentations to educate individuals about disability etiquette and people first language. Interested employers, agencies or organizations may contact GCD at gcd@oa.mo.gov or 573-751-2600 to schedule a presentation.

Planning efforts for 16th [Annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) are well underway. Please see page 2 of this newsletter for details.

OATS Transit

Did you know...

OATS is operating an extended service in Camden County; the Tri-County Transit. This service includes evenings and weekends to the general public.

Just like their regular routes, simply call 800-269-6287 to make reservations. Spread the word to others, especially to those that have transportation problems.

Visit the OATS Website for further information: www.OATSTRANSIT.ORG



Preparing for the 2018 MO-YLF

by **Wendy Molitor**



MO-YLF keynote speaker
Amberley Snyder

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning team has made a lot of headway into the planning of the 2018 forum.

We have chosen Amberley Snyder as our keynote speaker. <http://www.amberleysnyder.org/amberleysnyder/> Check Amberley out in the provided link. She is sure to be an inspiration to all.

We are also excited to be back at the Mizzou Campus again this year. As a reminder, we will hold our 2018 Forum July 10th-14th and the deadline for high school students to apply is February 28. If you know of a high school youth in the state of Missouri with a disability and desire to lead between the ages of 16-21, encourage them to apply. Applications may be completed online.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, please complete the online application (look under "Who serves as staff?"). We are always looking for donations, cash or in kind, or simply your time.

Please visit <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm> for more information or to apply.

Meet MO-YLF alumna Caitlin Bartley

by **Caitlin Bartley**



Caitlin Bartley

I attended MO-YLF in 2009, which was the summer between high school graduation and my first semester of college. For me, the highlight of MO-YLF was going to the capital because it gave me my first taste of legislative advocacy. I already knew that I wanted to be a social worker, but this experience helped me to see that I wanted to be a disability advocate. Since I was a delegate in 2009, I have returned as a panel speaker, a mentor, and a keynote speaker. I also was the 2015 recipient of GCD's Youth Leadership Award.

I attended Lincoln University, where I double majored in social work and psychology. During my time there, I completed two psychology internships (Special Learning Center and Boys and Girls Club of the Capital City) and one social work practicum (Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence). Through LU's Women's Leadership Academy, I completed a project in which I made suggestions to the University President on how to make the campus more wheelchair-friendly. These suggestions included constructing a new entrance to the sciences building and reconstructing a pedestrian bridge. These renovations were completed 2014. I graduated magna cum laude from Lincoln University in 2015 with a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology and a Bachelor's of Science in Social Work (BSW).

In 2016, I began the Master's program at the University of Missouri School of Social Work. My concentration was policy, planning, and administration. I did my final practicum with the Missouri Department of Mental Health-Division of Developmental Disabilities. This was an amazing experience in which I learned about disability policy on a state and local level. I assisted in revising division policies and regulations to reflect a person-centered approach and assessed disability service providers' policies and regulations to ensure compliance with federal regulations. I completed this practicum and graduated with my Master's of Social Work (MSW) in July 2017.

I still work for the Division of Developmental Disabilities as the National Core Indicators (NCI) Project Coordinator. National Core Indicators is a nationwide effort to assess, measure and track system performance. Through the data collected through NCI surveys, the Division can track their own performance over time and compare their data to the national average and to other states. As the NCI Project Coordinator, I oversee the NCI surveys and processes for the state of Missouri. This includes providing technical assistance to surveyors, reviewing and entering survey data into the NCI database, analyzing survey results and giving presentations on the data. I've been in this position since August and I absolutely love it! The data helps us see where service gaps exist, which helps the Division improve the quality of services.

In my free time, I love spending time with friends and family (I have 11 nieces and nephews, including a set of triplets). I am a huge St. Louis Cardinals fan and I love country music.

To read more from Caitlin, check out her blog

According to Cait
<https://accordingtocaitblog.com>

Office of Special Education

by Bonnie Aaron, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The [Office of Special Education](#) administers state and federal funds to support services for students and adults with disabilities. This office works with other state and local agencies to coordinate the [Missouri First Steps](#) program, which provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

The office works with local school districts in developing and improving special education services for students (ages 3-21) with disabilities. It also provides financial and technical support for all approved sheltered workshops in the state. Sheltered workshops provide employment for adults with disabilities.

This office also oversees the operation of three school systems administered by the State Board of Education. These are the Missouri School for the Blind, the Missouri School for the Deaf and the Missouri Schools for Severely Disabled. Through their outreach programs and consulting services, these school systems assist local school personnel and families throughout the state in meeting the needs of children with disabilities.

Editors note: The Governor's Council on Disability invites state liaisons from all Missouri state departments to participate in the quarterly council meetings. Bonnie Aaron serves as the state liaison for the Office of Special Education.



Missouri First Steps is one of the programs administered by the Office of Special Education

Meet Council Member Ron Hack



As a member of Evans & Dixon's Business Law Group, Ron represents large and small companies defending against various toxic tort claims involving asbestos, benzene, mold and welding rod fumes, as well as all types of environmental enforcement actions, product liability claims involving electrical equipment, recreational devices, pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

He also counsels small to mid-level companies regarding contracts, labor and employment matters, insurance coverage, and environmental matters. He tries cases involving all types of commercial matters including supply contracts, employee non-compete issues, and environmental contamination. He has been professionally recognized by *Best Lawyer in America* ® from 2013-2017.

Ron has been serving as a Council member for the Governor's Council on Disability since October 2, 2009 and currently serves as the vice chair. He is very involved in his community and is also an active member of Sunset Hills Conservation Foundation, Sunset Hills Chamber of Commerce Development Committee, and was a past board member and past president of the United Cerebral Palsy of St. Louis

**Missouri Governor's
Council on Disability
Members**

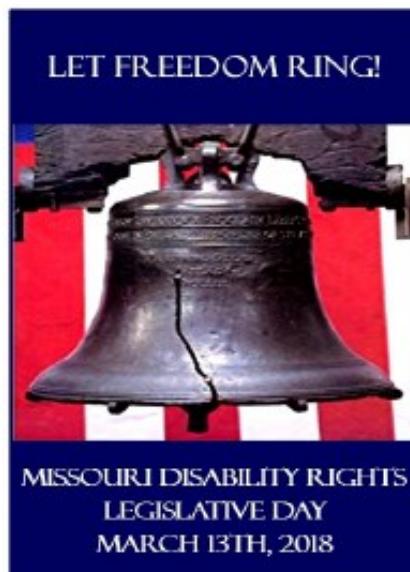
- Yvonne Wright, Chair,
New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D,
Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock,
Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D.,
St. Louis
- Ronald Hack,
St. Louis
- Chip Hailey,
Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter,
St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon,
West Plains
- Katie Jones,
St. Charles
- Todd Mayfield,
Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega,
Columbia
- Susan Orton,
Creve Coeur
- James Trout,
St. Louis
- Robert Wallace,
St. Louis

2018 Disability Rights Legislative Day



This year's EMCEE.....

Christopher Worth of
Paraquad!



SAVE THE DATE!

Disability Rights Legislative Day!

“Let Freedom Ring!”

**Tuesday, March 13th,
2018**

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Missouri State Capitol

Please call 800.500.7878 if you need
more information.

Upcoming Events

February 28, 2018	Application deadline for Missouri Youth Leadership Forum delegates (Staff/volunteer applications due May 1, 2018)
March 2, 2018	Lake Transition Network, State Fair Community College, Osage Beach
March 13, 2018	Disability Rights Legislative Day, Missouri State Capitol, Jefferson City
March 14, 2018	Cole County Youth Transition Fair, Lincoln University, Jefferson City
March 30, 2018	Reverse Job Fair, Inn at Grand Glaize, Osage Beach
April 16-17, 2018	Power Up to the Summit , Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia
July 10-14, 2018	Missouri Youth Leadership Forum , MU Campus, Columbia
	For more information or questions about the events, please contact our office at 573-751-2600.



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 2, April 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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April is Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month

GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

Welcome to the April issue of the GCD Newsletter. We are all excited that spring has finally arrived! Here's a recap of some of the activities GCD staff have been involved in since February:

Claudia Browner was hired as the new executive director for GCD on April 2. Claudia has been working for the State of Missouri for 25 years, with more than 12 of those years for the Governor's Council on Disability. To complete the team, GCD will be hiring another staff member in the near future.

Disability Rights Legislative Day was held March 14 at the Capitol in Jefferson City. At least 336 people attended and shared their thoughts with legislators.

Laura Mueth provided disability awareness and legislative presentations to various groups throughout the state in February and March, and will be presenting disability awareness training twice in May. See her article on page 2 regarding one of the events at which she will be presenting.

Wendy Molitor collaborated with the Lake Transition Network, Cole County Youth Connections, and Warrensburg Regional Transition Network to put on transition fairs in mid Missouri for high school students living with disabilities.

Wendy Molitor and the MO-YLF planning team have been working on getting ready for the 2018 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF). The team has interviewed the applicants and selected 24 delegates for this year. See page 2 for an update on the MO-YLF.

Collaboration with the Missouri Interagency Transition Team has opened the door for GCD's involvement in the Transition Institute, held June 26-28 in Columbia, where GCD will present a breakout session.

GCD staff provided an exhibit booth and attended conference sessions at the Power Up conference hosted by Missouri Assistive Technology on April 16-17 in Columbia. On day two of the conference, GCD presented the 2017 Inclusion, Youth Leadership, and Website award winners with their recognition awards.

GCD Annual Award winners honored

The Governor's Council on Disability initiated its annual awards programs over 25 years ago to recognize individuals and organizations who champion efforts in the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

The [Inclusion Award](#) and one Honorable Mention are presented to recognize private and public employers, individuals, and organizations that have successfully included people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, and leisure activities.

The 2017 Inclusion Award winner is Talent Connect, an employment program of UCP Heartland for individuals with disabilities.



Richard Coleman, Program Director, Talent Connect

(Continued on page 3)

2nd Annual Access Ability Business Summit

by **Laura Mueth**



For the second year the Access Ability Business Summit will be held in Jefferson City. This year's date is May 17, lasting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It will be held at SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital.

The event provides an opportunity for human resource professionals to be educated about the value people with disabilities can bring to their workplaces and assists them in determining how to reach and welcome this group into their businesses.

GCD staff Wendy Molitor has served on the planning committee. GCD staff Laura Mueth will be presenting on disability awareness and etiquette at the event. GCD Council members Todd and Elijah Mayfield will be the keynote speakers. Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) credit will be provided to attendees.

More information and registration can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2nd-annual-accessability-business-summit-tickets-44042843330>

MO-YLF grooms future leaders

by **Wendy Molitor**



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) follows the California Youth Leadership Forum model. The California model has been implemented successfully since 1992. Missouri has successfully implemented the Youth Leadership Forum since 2001. GCD has learned a lot along the way. At the end of the day, what GCD really wants to see is alumni leadership in the MO-YLF through and through. We have graduated some amazing individuals that possess stellar leadership skills and qualities. With the right continued training, supports and partnerships, alumni absolutely have what it takes to take on leadership roles in the program.

We have several alumni that have returned to MO-YLF to volunteer their time nearly every year since their graduation from the program. Stop for a moment and consider the dedication these individuals have to this program. That is 5 days dedicated away from their homes and jobs; some of them even save up their vacation time specifically to be available every year. If that does not show leadership, I am not sure what does.

GCD's goal is to collaborate with other agencies across the state to provide continued training to the MO-YLF alumni. Specifically, we would like to focus on preparing the alumni to take on many of the leadership roles within the MO-YLF program. Missouri is unique in that we have excellent partnerships and resources that allow us to do this with ease. If your agency is interested in collaborating with us, please do not hesitate to contact us and see how you can get involved.

The 2018 MO-YLF will be July 10-14, 2018 on the Mizzou campus. We have selected 24 delegates this year and this group is going to shine. Be sure to read our alumni highlight as well. These are the next Missouri leaders, definitely people you are going to want to know and connect with.

Meet MO-YLF alumna Lily Womack



Hello I'm Lily Womack, I am an alumna of the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. My goal in life is to make a difference in my school, community, and in others' lives.

I recently received 6th place in the state for early childcare teaching through Skills USA. I am in the leadership role of junior schoolboard representative where I sit on my school board and tell them how school life is going for me and my peers. I help in many community service projects.

The Forum has helped me with my everyday life in my leadership role. whether it be speaking at a community event or leading an activity. I use the skills the Forum taught me in everyday life.

I would like to return to the Forum as staff to pay forward the confidence it has given me to the future alumni and leaders. I would also like to return to help better myself and improve my leadership skills for my soon to be preschoolers next fall.

GCD Annual Award winners honored

by Claudia Browner

(Continued from page 1)



The Honorable Mention recipient for the 2017 Inclusion Award is Kate Hannon, an early educator and inclusion advocate who currently serves as a senior director of Belle Children's Services of St. Louis Arc.

The Youth Leadership Award program recognizes an outstanding Missouri youth (age 16-26) with a disability that demonstrates exemplary leadership by making a difference in their community.

The 2017 Youth Leadership Award winner is Andrew Tollefson, who has made it his mission to help people understand the ability behind the disability. Andrew serves as a tutor and mentor for elementary school children, and as an annual DisABILITY Awareness speaker to educate others and advocate for people with disabilities.



The Website Award recognizes Missouri-based organizations that provide a user-friendly websites that are accessible to all.

The 2017 Website Award winner is Deaf Inc.

Deaf, Inc's website has a great overall design. The featured videos are in American Sign Language with accurate captions and the text content is easily accessible through refreshable readers for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Photos: Top left—Claudia Browner presents the award to Kate Hannon, Right—Andrew Tollefson displays his award, Left—Deaf, Inc.'s Director of Community Programs, Tia Morris, and Marketing Director Tony Nitko display their award.

Meet Council Member Opeoluwa Sotonwa



One of the most recent appointees to the Governor's Council on Disability is Opeoluwa Sotonwa, who was appointed as a council member on March 7, 2018.

Mr. Opeoluwa Sotonwa is the Executive Director of Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH). He was formerly with the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH). Mr. Sotonwa has been involved with disability rights issues since becoming a lawyer in Nigeria. He holds an LL.M. (Master of Laws) from Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C., where he graduated Cum Laude and currently a doctoral candidate of Law and Policy at Northeastern University in Boston Massachusetts.

Mr. Sotonwa is a former Vice President of the National Black Deaf Advocates (NBDA). He also served as the Chair of the NBDA Board of Directors and continues to serve on the board of NBDA. Mr. Sotonwa is a member of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Missouri Association of the Deaf as well as several think-tank organizations that focus on disability rights advocacy.

By virtue of his position as the Executive Director of MCDHH, he is a member of Missouri Board for Certification of Interpreters, Relay Missouri Advisory Committee, Missouri Department of Mental Health Deaf Advisory Council, and Missouri Deaf-Blind Technical Assistance Project Advisory Committee. A consummate advocate; Mr. Sotonwa brings a lot of passion and a constituent-centered leadership approach. He lives in Jefferson City with his sons Bolu and Lekan.

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D., Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Claudia Browner Executive Director
- Wendy Molitor, Disability Program Specialist
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist

Upcoming Events

May 1-3, 2018

[Missouri Association for Workforce Development Conference](#), Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark

May 17, 2018

[Access Ability Business Summit](#), St. Mary's Hospital, Jefferson City

May 20-22, 2018

[Missouri Rehab Association Conference](#), Tan Tar A Resort, Osage Beach

June 26-28, 2018

[Transition Institute](#), Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia

July 10-14, 2018

[Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), MU Campus, Columbia

Opioid Crisis Response

The State of Missouri is facing an Opioid Public Health Crisis of epic proportions. It is tragically impacting the lives of families and communities every day. The Department of Mental Health (DMH) has received two federal grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide prevention, treatment and recovery services in response to the Opioid Crisis. Below are brief descriptions of these federal grants.



Opioid State Targeted Response (Opioid STR) Grant

[MissouriOpioidSTR.org](#)

DMH and the Missouri Institute of Mental Health (MIMH) are leading this project. Collaborative partners include substance use disorder and healthcare agencies, organizations, and academic affiliates throughout the state. The grant was received in May 2017.

The primary goals of the Opioid STR project include:

- 1) Increase provider and consumer-focused opioid use and overdose prevention initiatives and programs through school-based prevention, telehealth consultation on safe opioid prescribing in primary care, and expanded overdose education and naloxone distribution efforts;
- 2) Increase access to evidence-based Medication Assisted Treatment for uninsured individuals with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) through rigorous provider training, direct service delivery, healthcare integration, and improved transitions of care in hospital and outpatient settings;
- 3) Increase the number of individuals with an OUD who receive recovery support services through four (4) new Recovery Community Centers, supportive recovery housing, and peer specialist services; and
- 4) Increase the likelihood of sustainability through policy and practice change as well as demonstrated effectiveness of grant-supported protocols.



Prevent Drug/Opioid (PDO) Overdose-Related Deaths Grant

[MO-HOPEProject.org](#)

DMH provides overall coordination and leadership, with the National Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse (NCADA) leading the implementation and MIMH leading the administration and evaluation of the program. This grant was received in September 2016.

The goal of the Missouri Opioid-Heroin Overdose Prevention and Education (MO-HOPE) Project is to reduce the number of opioid overdose-related deaths and adverse events among individuals 18 years of age and older.

Key components of the grant include training emergency responders, substance use disorder treatment providers, and other key community sectors on the prevention of opioid overdose-related deaths. The primary focus is on secondary prevention strategies, including the purchase and distribution of naloxone to persons at risk of experiencing or witnessing an overdose.

MO-HOPE training for diverse professional and community audiences focuses on evidence-based practices to reduce rates of overdose through public health and harm reduction strategies.

For information on the Statewide Departmental efforts go to [opioids.mo.gov](#).



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 3, June 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

As we are getting closer to summer, our focus has been to prepare for the upcoming annual [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) for students with disabilities. The 16th annual MO-YLF will be held next month, July 10-14, 2018 on the MU campus in Columbia.



This year, 22 youth delegates are coming to MO-YLF to learn about leadership, legislative and self-advocacy, disability history and awareness, independent living, assistive technology, career options and much more. In addition to the incoming youth delegates, 18 returning alumni will participate in the event

in various roles from MO-YLF alumni chair to group facilitators, team members, logistics staff, and mentors.

Along with delegates and alumni, MO-YLF requires a team of dedicated volunteer staff members to make this event possible and successful. We would like to thank our partners at Paraquad, Inc., Camden County DD Resources, MU Hook Center (Pre-Employment Transition Services), Vocational Rehabilitation and The Whole Person, Inc. for their tireless support and dedication to MO-YLF.

MO-YLF is a program funded solely from sponsorships and donations. We rely on the generous support of our sponsors to provide this annual leadership forum at no cost to the student delegates and would like to recognize the 2018 sponsors of the MO-YLF: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Edward Jones, Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, Integrity Home Care, and all of the organizations who provided in-kind donations.

Over the next few weeks, we will finalize our preparations for MO-YLF and are excited to meet this year's new group of young leaders!

In May, Laura Mueth provided two Disability Awareness presentations at the Missouri Association for Workforce Development Conference in Lake Ozark and at the Access Ability Business Summit in Jefferson City. The presentations provide information on how to engage with individuals with disabilities, disability awareness and etiquette, employment of people with disabilities, and service animals. If your agency or organization is interested in providing this training to your employees or HR staff, please contact our office at 573-751-2600 or gcd@oa.mo.gov.

Last but not least, the Governor's Council on Disability is in the process of hiring two new staff members—a Disability Program Specialist and an Administrative Office Support Assistant—to complete the team.

Consumer Directed Services Program

by Claudia Browner



Consumer Directed Services (CDS) is a Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) program that provides personal care attendant (PCA) services to people with physical disabilities, to enable them to live independently in home settings in their communities instead of an institutional settings such as a nursing home. This Medicaid-based program is funded by MO HealthNet and administered by the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). The Missouri Centers for Independent Living and private providers contract with DHSS to provide program services to the participants. The program participants self-direct their care and hire their own attendants. The cost of CDS care is typically much lower than nursing home or institutional care.

Because of last year's budget cuts, the Level of Care (LOC) required to be eligible for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) or nursing facility care was raised from 21 to 24*. The cost cap maximum for the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program was reduced from 100% of the average cost of nursing facility care to 60% of the average cost of nursing facility care. HCBS provider reimbursement rates were reduced by 3%.

During the 2018 legislative session, the HCBS provider reimbursement rate was increased by 1.5% and, if signed into law by the Governor, will reinstate 1.5% of last year's rate reduction. The CDS cost cap was not restored and remains at 60%, and the LOC reduction was not restored and remains at 24 to be eligible for CDS.

For an individual with a disability, this means that the threshold for eligibility to receive care has increased. People who currently receive HCBS services will have their eligibility reevaluated during their annual assessment. As a result, some individuals' benefits may be terminated or reduced.

More information about the CDS program can be found on DHSS's website at: <https://health.mo.gov/seniors/hcbs/info.php> or <https://health.mo.gov/seniors/homecomservices/?style=mobile1>

You may also visit the website of your local center for independent living (CIL). To find the CIL closest to you, visit the Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council at www.mosilc.org



(Photo: A CDS client receives assistance in her home)

*In order to determine eligibility for CDS services, an annual assessment of the individual is performed to determine the nursing facility Level of Care (LOC) score. A numeric score of 0, 3, 6, or 9 points is assigned to each of the nine LOC categories. This information documents the amount of assistance required and the participant's complexity of care. An individual is determined to be qualified for nursing facility LOC with an assessed cumulative score of 24 points or higher.

Meet MO-YLF alum Ray Atty

by Claudia Browner

"Hello I'm Ray Atty. I've been a Quality Reviewer at the IRS for 11 years and a cashier at Big Lots for almost three years. I graduated from MO-YLF in 2004. I have volunteered as a staff member in 2005, and every year since 2013. My hobbies are playing video games & hanging out with friends. I enjoy volunteering for MO-YLF because it gives me a chance to give back to the program that helped me become a leader in my community. MO-YLF has impacted my life by helping me in becoming a leader in spite of my disability. I'm looking forward to volunteering again as a staff member for MO-YLF this summer."

In addition to serving as volunteer staff for six years, Ray has also been involved in fundraising efforts for the MO-YLF, participated in MYLIFE Alumni Association activities, and become a great friend to alumni and staff alike.



Meet Council member Elijah Mayfield

by Todd Mayfield



One of the newest Council members of the Governor's Council on Disability is Elijah Mayfield, 22, from Jefferson City, Missouri, who was appointed on March 14, 2018.

Elijah has been serving as an intern in the Missouri Governor's Office since December 2014. Elijah works as a courier where he processes, sorts and delivers important documents for the Governor and his staff.

Elijah says, "I love my job because I get to interact with a lot of different people throughout the capitol building and in various state office buildings. Every day is a great opportunity to show people that people with Down syndrome have a lot to offer and can serve in many different capacities.

In June, 2015, I was a special guest of then Governor Nixon when he signed Senate Bill 174 -- the bill that authorized the Missouri version of the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act to allow people with disabilities or their family members to open tax-exempt savings accounts to help pay their expenses. I was thrilled to get to be a part of the process of getting this very important piece of legislation passed in our state.

I also work as a volunteer at SSM Health-St. Mary's Hospital. My favorite part about serving at the hospital is getting to work in a variety of positions where I am learning different job skills while also getting to help others."

Elijah is an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan. He loves watching or listening to as many Cardinals games as he can. To quote Elijah, "One of my favorite things in the world is going to watch the Cardinals play live."

Elijah was selected by the National Down Syndrome Society as their 2016 Self Advocate of the Year.

You can see Elijah's media coverage here: <http://elijah.net>

**Missouri Governor's
Council on Disability
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- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Travel Tips for Accessible Tourism

By Claudia Browner

This time of the year, many of us like to take time off to travel the great state of Missouri or explore other destinations in the U.S. and around the world. Travel can be fun and exciting, but it also requires some planning and preparation. Following are some links that might help you prepare for your next trip.



If you like camping in Missouri State Parks, the Department of Natural Resources—Missouri State Parks Division has information online to plan your next trip. The website includes information about accessibility features in each state park. Visit <https://mostateparks.com/page/61837/accessibility-information-park-or-historic-site>

If you like to go fishing, hunting, boating, or enjoy other outdoor activities, visit the Department of Conservation's website for a listing of accessible conservation areas at <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/find-places-go-mo/accessible-outdoors>

Missouri Tourism website: <https://www.visitmo.com/>

National Park Accessibility: <https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/accessibility.htm>

US Department of Transportation—Traveling with a Disability
<https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/traveling-disability>

The ABC's of Accessible Travel
https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/ABCs_of_Accessible_Travel-Digital_Brochure.pdf

Air Travel with Service Animals
https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/docs/AirTravel_with_ServiceAnimals-Digital_Brochure_o.pdf

Enjoy your summer and safe travels!!

**Missouri Governor's
Council on Disability
Staff Members**

- Claudia Browner Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist
- Vacant, Disability Program Specialist
- Vacant, Administrative Office Support Assistant

Upcoming Events

- July 10-14 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), MU Campus, Columbia
- July 24-26 [APSE-MO Employment Summit](#), Courtyard by Marriott, Columbia
- August 8 MO State Highway Patrol Drivers Examiners Disability 101 training, Jefferson City
- August 21 MO Dept. of Corrections ADAA Title I training
- August 24 GCD Quarterly Council Meeting, Runge Conservation Nature Center, Jefferson City



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 4, August 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD Update

by Claudia Browner

Welcome to the August issue of the GCD Newsletter. The Governor's Council on Disability has had a couple of exciting months, with the highlights being the 16th annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (see the article on page 2) and the hiring of two new staff members—Rachel Rackers and Christina Brazell.

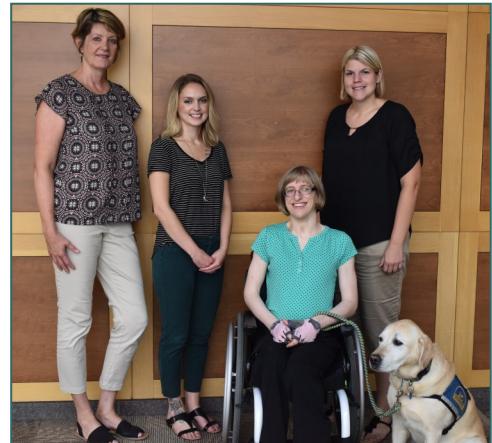
Rachel Rackers (Top left photo) started July 2 as a Disability Program Specialist and the new coordinator for the annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum.



Christina Brazell (Bottom left photo) joined the GCD on August 1 as an Administrative Office Support Assistant.



I am very excited to have all staff positions filled and look forward to continuing the mission of the GCD by providing disability-related information and referrals, training, education and resources to the citizens of Missouri.



GCD staff (Top right photo): Claudia Browner, Christina Brazell, Laura Mueth, Rachel Rackers, and service dog Syler.

Changes for Disabled Placard Renewal

by Claudia Browner

Recent legislation changed the physician's statement recertification requirement for individuals with disabilities who use a disabled placard/license plate for their vehicle(s) from every four years to every eight years, effective August 28, 2018. The legislation did not change the requirement for the renewal of the placards, which are still required to be renewed every four years.

The Missouri Department of Revenue has mailed a "Disabled Placard Renewal Notice" to all Missouri residents who currently have a 'disabled placard' to explain the changes.

Applicants who are at least 75 years of age, military service veterans with a permanent disability, or not-for-profit organizations who provide transportation for individuals with disabilities are exempt from providing a physician's statement.

Details about the new requirements can be found on the Department of Revenue's [website](#) at:

<http://dor.mo.gov/motorv/placards/permanent.php#renew>

2018 MO-YLF a Great Success!

by Rachel Rackers



The 2018 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) was a great success. We had 17 delegates from 14 different Missouri counties who graduated to become alumni. After this year's MO-YLF, there are a total of 314 alumni who have graduated from the program. There were 14 alumni from past years that returned to participate in a staff member role, and two additional alumni who participated in the mentor event.

Each year, MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities a week-long college setting experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports. It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences, which is what MO-YLF provides. The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders. Students were selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills, the delegates learned to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to the community.



There were many great experiences and events that the delegates were able to partake in throughout the week. During the day, delegates participated in a variety of small and large group learning sessions, followed by planned fun-filled evenings. Some of the highlights were the keynote speaker, Amberley Snyder, adaptive sports night, a day at the Capitol, a talent show, dance and photo booth. It didn't take very long at all, for the delegates to bond and join together to enjoy these activities!



Each year, the delegates participate in a community service project. This year's selection was Operation Gratitude, which sends 250,000+ Care Packages to Deployed Troops, New Recruits, Veterans, First Responders, Wounded Heroes and their Care Givers. With the help from delegates and staff, we were able to collect and donate nearly 8,000 items and a monetary donation for shipping the items. Once these items were brought in, they had to be sorted, bagged, and boxed before being shipped to Operation Gratitude. This project was very much so a team effort, but everyone stepped up to the challenge.

MO-YLF wouldn't be a great success without all of the wonderful people, who take time out of their own busy schedule to lend a helping hand. There are a wide variety of roles that must be filled during the week and it takes a solid team, which is exactly what we had. We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and partnering agencies for 2018 MO-YLF: Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation, Edward Jones, Paraquad, Integrity Home Care and Hospice, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, Camden County Developmental Disability Resources, Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, and The Whole Person, as well as several other agencies that provided in-kind donations. New on board this year as volunteer staff were employees from Central Workforce Development Board - Youth 180.

Everything that is needed to make MO-YLF a great and successful experience was present---great delegates, fantastic staff and alumni, and excellent sponsors. A giant thank you to each of you!

We look forward to next year's MO-YLF.

Photos: Top right—staff and delegates with keynote speaker, Amberley Snyder. Center left—delegate, Joseph Hill, looking over Governor's Proclamation. Center right—delegates and alumni at dance.

Meet MO-YLF Alum Isaiah Shields

by **Rachel Rackers**



Every year, the Governor's Council on Disability puts on the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) for students with disabilities. Since this 5-day leadership and transition program started in 2001, 314 delegates have graduated from the MO-YLF. The key success to the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is leadership by example, and that is what Isaiah Shields does.

Isaiah attended MO-YLF in 2017 before entering his senior year at Central High School in Springfield, MO. During his time as a delegate, he learned more about his disability and how to use accommodations at the collegiate level. Not only does Isaiah have leadership skills, he also has talent in performing, which led him to winning first place in the 2017 MO-YLF Talent Show. After attending as a delegate, he knew that he wanted to continue to be a part of MO-YLF.

For the 2018 Forum, Isaiah returned as a Team Member. He enjoyed being a part of staff and said, "I loved getting to know new people and seeing new faces around the program. It's a small organization, but all of the students and facilitators have big hearts for everyone at the forum. This year for me was definitely amazing because I had such a great time being the hype-man this year as a team leader". During the 2018 MO-YLF, he also played a part in organizing and setting up this year's Talent Show.

As far as future plans go for Isaiah, he plans on obtaining a Registered Nurse degree and becoming a full-time traveling nurse around the United States. Also, in the future he would like to help build an organization to prevent human-trafficking and sex-trafficking. There is no doubt that wherever life takes Isaiah, that he will bring leadership, positivity and a smile to everyone's face.

Meet Council Chair Yvonne Wright

by **Claudia Browner**



Yvonne Wright is the current chair of the Governor's Council on Disability. She was appointed to this role on July 21, 2015.

Yvonne currently serves as the Director of Workforce Engagement and Innovation for the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. She began this new role June 1, 2018, and works to oversee collaboration of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other partners to better serve all of Missouri's job seekers. Prior to this, she worked almost 25 years for Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation. She served in several capacities there, including counselor, supervisor, Assistant Director of Independent Living and in her last job as Director of Workforce Development and Business Engagement.

Yvonne sees her role as chair to not only serve and support the Council members and staff, but to show commitment to improving and enhancing the lives of people with disabilities.

"It is an honor to serve in this role. Since taking on this role in 2015 the Council has gone through many changes, but what has never altered is the undying dedication of the Council members and staff to serve our Missourians with disabilities and support their needs."

**Missouri Governor's
Council on Disability
Members**

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D., Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

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Council on Disability
Staff Members**

- Christina Brazell, Administrative Office Support Assistant
- Claudia Browner Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Disability Program Specialist

2018 Legislative Priorities Poll

By Laura Mueth

Each year the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) sends out a poll to hear from the public regarding disability related legislation and areas of concern. This year's poll will be released August 27, 2018. The GCD staff and council members encourage every Missouri citizen impacted by disability to complete it. The deadline for responses is Friday, November 9, 2018 at 5:00 p.m.

Each response received is reviewed by staff and will be used as we shape the Council's legislative priorities and interactions with legislators for the 2019 legislative session. The results will also be shared with members of the legislature.

The legislative priorities poll may be completed via Survey Monkey or PDF. The PDF can be filled out electronically, or printed and completed by hand. The poll will be available on the Legislative Priorities Poll page of the GCD website, at events, and the online survey link will be sent to the GCD email lists.

Hard copies can be returned via fax (573-526-4109), email (gcd@oa.mo.gov), and mail (Governor's Council on Disability, 301 West High Street, Room 840 PO Box 1668, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1668). Assistance with completion is available by contacting the GCD office at 800-877-8249.

We look forward to reading the responses!

Upcoming Events

- August 8 MO State Highway Patrol Drivers Examiners Disability 101 training, Jefferson City
- August 21 MO Dept. of Corrections ADAA Title I training
- August 24 GCD Quarterly Council Meeting, Runge Conservation Nature Center, Jefferson City
- Sept. 7-8 [Parent & Caregiver Retreat conference](#), Lodge of Four Seasons, Lake Ozark
- Sept. 11 [The Arc of Missouri Annual Education Summit](#), Courtyard Marriott, Columbia
- Sept. 12 [Missouri Symposium on Supported Decision Making](#), Holiday Inn EC, Columbia
- Sept. 12 New VR Counselor Training, Jefferson City
- Sept. 14 State Human Resource Management Council (SHRMC) presentation, Jefferson City
- Nov. 4-5 [Missouri School Counselors Association conference](#), Tan-Tar-A, Lake Ozark
- Nov. 29-30 [First Responder training](#), Jefferson City



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 5, October 2018

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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October is Disability History and Awareness Month

by Claudia Brownner

October is a very important month in the disability community as advocates and disability organizations celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in Missouri.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

The United States Department of Labor's theme for 2018 is *America's Workforce: Empowering All*. More about this year's theme and other information can be found here: [National Disability Employment Awareness Month News Release](#)



Disability History Month

In May 2011, the Missouri legislature passed House Bill 555, which authorizes school boards to require the provision of disability history and awareness instruction in public schools during the month of October of each year and designates the month of October to be **“Disability History and Awareness Month.”**

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) is proud to participate in celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month:

- Governor Parson issued proclamations recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in Missouri
- The Governor's Council on Disability features an exhibit about National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Disability History Month in the Truman State Office Building in Jefferson City throughout the month of October

- The GCD participates in the MPACT Transition Summit for students with disabilities

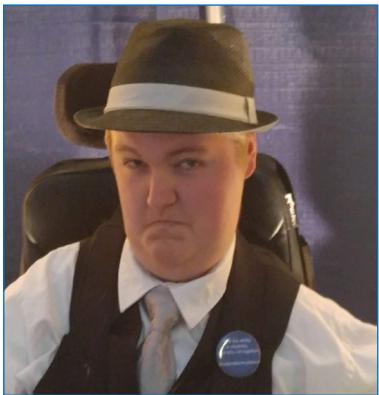
- The GCD [calls for nominations](#) to recognize individuals and organizations that exemplify inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workplace and all aspects of life. Awards are presented annually in the categories of [Inclusion](#), [Youth Leadership](#), and [Website/IT](#)

To learn more about disability history and find great resources on how to promote and celebrate Disability History Month, download the [Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide for Missouri](#) or visit [disability.mo.gov](#) and click on Educational Resources.



Meet MO-YLF Alum Daniel Andersen

by Daniel Andersen



Daniel attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum just after completing high school in 2015. He took MO-YLF's lessons of leadership and advocacy to heart and decided to search out ways that he could improve his community and stand as an example of the potential that all people with disabilities have inside of themselves.

Daniel is a junior studying political science and communications so that he can better become a public advocate and community leader. He hopes to become a professional public speaker when he graduates so that he can share his life with the world as a way to break social barriers for all people with disabilities. He learned of this passion when he spoke during the Hands Around the Capitol event and the MPACT summit in 2015 directly following his Youth Leadership Forum experience. One day he hopes to serve the people in a public office as a representative of all people, especially those minorities that have been under represented by the government.

This past August Daniel was named the new Chairman of the MYLIFE Alumni Association, an association for all graduates for the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum program. He plans to use his leadership skills learned from the Forum and his three years experience as the campus president of the on-campus housing student government at Brigham Young University in Provo Utah where he attends school, to help improve the Alumni Association. Daniel hopes that the Alumni Association will become a more involved, vocal force in the community and help to continue the development of all leaders within it's reach. He is excited to take on this role and is hopeful for what the future holds.

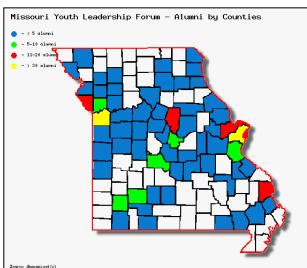
Youth Leadership and Transition

by Rachel Rackers



Although the 2019 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) is nearly 10 months away, the planning committee has already begun preparations for next July's event. The dates for 2019 MO-YLF will be set soon and information will be sent out and added to the GCD website in the coming weeks.

There have been a couple changes discussed already, such as extending the deadline for delegate applications until March 31, 2019 and adding or expanding topics to be discussed throughout the week. Those topics are relationships and independent living, which will be of importance in all delegates' lives.



The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is an excellent and life-changing event for our delegates. Since MO-YLF started in 2001, 314 alumni have graduated from the program. A goal for this year and those to follow is to expand on the number of counties represented. As of 2018, alumni have come from 63 out of 114 counties and the City of St. Louis. In order to be able to expand into the other 51 counties, it will take more outreach to spread the word about MO-YLF. To help obtain this goal, it will take making connections with school districts and agencies within those areas. The best way to spread the word is to talk about MO-YLF to others so if you get the opportunity, be sure to share the information!

GCD participated in the 10th Annual [MPACT Transition Summit](#) on October 9 in Jefferson City to do outreach to potential MO-YLF delegates, educators and service providers.



Together with two MO-YLF alumni, GCD staff provided a breakout session about the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum as well as an exhibit booth to share information about the MO-YLF and other GCD services and programs.

Nearly 300 individuals attended the event to learn about youth leadership development, housing, employment services, assistive technology, independent living and self-determination.



We Need Your Help to Recognize Leaders

by Christina Brazell

The Governor's Council on Disability is searching for the best of the best! There are so many individuals and organizations out there supporting the Disability Community, and we need to know who they are! The GCD only gives out these awards ONCE a year, please don't let those exceptional individuals go unnoticed. Help us find our Winners!

It takes only a few minutes to complete the nomination form and give the gift of recognition to those who truly deserve it.

The following awards are open for nominations:

- The [Inclusion Award](#) recognizes and honors individuals or organizations that have demonstrated the best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities.
- The [Youth Leadership Award](#) recognizes emerging young leaders (age 16-26) in the disability community.
- The [Website/IT Award](#) honors a Missouri non-profit organization, business or local government that offers accessible and user-friendly websites.



A panel of judges selects the winners for each award category and the winners receive their awards at the Power Up Assistive Technology conference.

If you know of any individuals or organizations who deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments, please submit a nomination for one (or more) of these prestigious awards! The nomination forms can be found and completed online at <https://disability.mo.gov/files/2018-GCD-Awards-announcement.pdf>

Meet Council member Susan Orton

by Claudia Browner



Susan Orton is a long-time, devoted member of the Council. She is a resident of St. Louis who grew up in New Jersey and Maryland. Susan has been married many years to her husband, George, and has three children, Karen, Kevin, and Kristen, 2 fantastic grandchildren and a spoiled dog, named Jac. For the past 9 years, Susan has been a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Gundaker.

Here's what Susan shared about her life:

"In 1988 our family was changed forever. Karen was severely injured in a car crash. Her fiancé was killed and Karen sustained a traumatic brain injury plus multiple broken bones. Miraculously, she survived, but deficits remained. Karen was fortunate to experience several years of rehab that allowed her to recover as best as she could. Her determination was the guiding factor.

Because Karen received excellent care and recovered sufficiently to live on her own (with supports, of course), I made it my goal to help others less fortunate. A social worker at the hospital where Karen was initially taken said, "Karen can't advocate for herself, so you will have to do it." That has been my motto all these years.

To that end, I served on the state and local Board of the Missouri Head Injury Association (now the Brain Injury Association of MO) and was a member and Chair of the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council (Brain Injury Advisory Council). Currently, I serve on the St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities, Governor's Council on Disability, and as a liaison to St. Louis County Older Adult Commission & St. Louis Realtors Inclusion Advisory Group.

As the years have gone by, I discovered housing and transportation were areas to focus my efforts. I am a huge supporter of Universal Design and recently facilitated the inclusion of UD criteria in the multiple listing service (MLS) all Realtors in the area utilize. I do not see a slowing down of my efforts as there is so much to be done."

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
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- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
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Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Christina Brazell, Administrative Office Support Assistant
- Claudia Browner Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Disability Program Specialist

Take Your Legislator To Work

By Claudia Browner

Each October during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the [Missouri DD Council](#) encourages individuals with disabilities to participate in the "Invite Your Legislator to Work" initiative to promote positive employment outcomes and recognize the value and talent people with disabilities bring to the workplace.



Legislators spend part of the day with the individual at their place of employment to learn about the importance of employment and the contributions the individuals bring to their workplace, community and the economy.

To learn more about this initiative, click [here](#) to see a video narrated by Missouri Representative Kip Kendrick or visit the DD Council's [website](#) at MODDCouncil.org

Your Opinion Matters

By Laura Mueth

The [2018 Legislative Priorities Poll](#) was released in late August.

The GCD staff and council members encourage every Missouri citizen impacted by disability to complete it. Each response received is reviewed by staff and will be used as we shape the Council's legislative priorities and interactions with legislators for the 2019 legislative session. Poll results will be shared with legislators and on our website.



The poll can be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7PD9WZ3>. It is also available in PDF format which can be filled out electronically or printed and completed by hand. This can be accessed at http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm or by contacting the GCD office at 800-877-8249.

Hard copies can be returned via fax (573-526-4109), email (gcd@oa.mo.gov), and mail (Governor's Council on Disability, 301 West High Street, Room 840, PO Box 1668, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1668). Assistance with completion is also available by contacting the GCD office.

The deadline for participation is Friday, November 9, 2018 at 5:00 pm.

If you have already completed the poll, thank you and please keep spreading the word with your contacts.

Upcoming Events

- October 16 [Community Engagement Conference](#), Truman State University, Kirksville
- October 17 [MO Interagency Transition Team \(MITT\) Retreat](#), Jefferson City
- October 18-19 [MACDDDS Conference](#), Holiday Inn Executive Center, Columbia
- November 4-5 [Missouri School Counselors Association conference](#), Tan-Tar-A, Lake Ozark
- November 16 GCD Quarterly Council Meeting, Runge Nature Center, Jefferson City
- November 29-30 [First Responder training](#), Jefferson City



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



Volume 4, Number 6, December 2018

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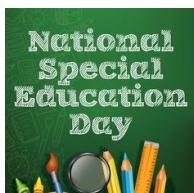
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GCD Update

by Claudia Browner



We wish all of our readers a very Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year!

With 2018 almost being over, the GCD is looking back on a very productive and eventful year. We reflect on the connections made with other state agencies, organizations, and the disability community and the new partnerships and initiatives that have been developed throughout the year.

We are thankful for the opportunity to be involved in many groups and committees that address the needs of individuals with disabilities and work hard to promote and improve full inclusion. With that in mind, GCD needs your help to recognize those individuals or organizations that already practice and demonstrate full inclusion by honoring them with one of the annual [GCD Awards](#).

For agencies or organizations that would like to help increase disability awareness and promote full inclusion, the GCD offers educational training on disability etiquette, employment, inclusion, and service animals. Please contact our office to schedule a presentation.

As we gear up for the new year and the legislative session beginning on January 9, we encourage you to take a look at the [Legislative Priorities Poll](#) report. Individuals who want to learn about the legislative process in Missouri and how to advocate for themselves can view our [Legislative Education Project](#) (LEP) videos online or schedule an LEP training. To stay informed about proposed legislation impacting individuals with disabilities, please subscribe to the weekly [Legislative Update](#).

Did You Know?

by Rachel Rackers

Throughout each year, there are many days, weeks or months that are dedicated to a particular subject to raise and promote awareness. These are important because they allow individuals – along with loved ones and advocate groups, to come together in unison around a common cause and provide support. There are two dates during December and January that relate to disability history.

December 2nd is National Special Education Day, which is observed annually on this date because it marks the anniversary of our nation's first federal special education law. This law is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which made education available to all American children including those with disabilities. Special Education Day was first celebrated on the 30th anniversary of IDEA in 2005. This is a day that honors the progress and continued growth in special education in schools.

January 4th is World Braille Day. It is observed on this particular date every year because it is birthday of the inventor, Louis Braille. After becoming blind from a childhood accident, he created the system of writing and began to master his new way of living. World Braille Day is an important reminder that even though the accessibility and independence for those who are blind or visually-impaired has improved, there are still many areas that are lacking. This date is a great opportunity to learn about braille and other accessible forms of communication. We can all do our part to ensure that accommodations and services are available for the blind and visually-impaired.

Information provided online by Health Line Awareness and Braille Works

Legislative Priorities Poll Results are in

by Laura Mueth

The Governor's Council on Disability recently conducted its annual [Legislative Priorities Poll](#) to determine the level of importance disability related issues have to Missourians impacted by disability through their personal and/or professional lives. Thank you to everyone who participated.

The results have been shared with members of our Council, legislators, the GCD listservs, and social media. Five hundred and thirty seven (537) polls were returned from seventy-seven (77) different counties.

Based on the responses received, the priorities for 2019 are:

1. All schools having evacuation plans for all people with disabilities
2. All public buildings having evacuation plans for all people with disabilities
3. MO HealthNet coverage for hearing aids for adults
4. Private insurance coverage requirement for hearing aids
5. Mandated insurance coverage for all physical and developmental disabilities

Survey participants were given the opportunity to list other topics that are important to the disability community. There were several topics mentioned frequently, which included:

- A lack of choice in employment
- Not having enough affordable, accessible housing
- Lack and/or failure of public transportation
- The cost of health care/insurance, and ensuring therapies and services are provided for adults and for additional disabilities
- Maintaining the motorcycle helmet law

The detailed report can be accessed on our website at https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm.

Date set for the 2019 MO-YLF

by Rachel Rackers



The planning committee for the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) has already begun putting things in place for the next year's Forum. The 17th annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum will be held July 16-20, 2019 at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Many modifications and additions have been made during planning to ensure that delegates get the most out of MO-YLF and are able to continue to grow and lead after they return home. One addition, is a parent session on graduation day. This will give staff the opportunity to connect, inform, and educate parents/guardians on how to help their delegate during transition.

The next addition, is implementing independent living (IL) and relationships into the week. Both of these topics are of importance and will impact delegates at some point in their lives. In addition to incorporating these topics into the week, the planning committee will also connect each delegate to their local IL Center. Once each

delegate graduates to become an alumni, they will begin to work towards their goals. Strategies are being discussed on ideas on how to help them achieve and focus on doing so. One of the ideas is to do a year follow along, which would include a phone call each month. This would give alumni an opportunity to ask questions or discuss steps they are taking to achieve their Leadership Plan goals.

Applications for staff, volunteers and delegates are now available on our website. The application deadlines are March 31, 2019 for delegates and May 1, 2019 for staff.

The MO-YLF planning committee encourages you to spread the word about MO-YLF and to come experience this life-changing week!

For more information about the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, please visit our website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>

Honor Leaders in the Disability Community

by Christina Brazell

The Governor's Council on Disability is searching for the best of the best! There are so many individuals and organizations out there supporting the Disability Community, and we need to know who they are! The GCD only gives out these awards ONCE a year, please don't let those exceptional individuals go unnoticed. Help us find our Winners!

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The following GCD Awards are open for nominations:

- The [Inclusion Award](#) recognizes and honors individuals or organizations that have demonstrated the best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities.
- The [Youth Leadership Award](#) recognizes emerging young leaders (age 16-26) in the disability community.
- The [Website/IT Award](#) honors a Missouri non-profit organization, business or local government that offers accessible and user-friendly websites.

A panel of judges selects the winners for each award category and the winners receive their awards at the Power Up Assistive Technology Conference and Expo.

If you know of any individuals or organizations who deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments, please submit a nomination for one (or more) of these prestigious awards! The nomination forms can be found and completed online by January 31, 2019 at <https://disability.mo.gov/files/2018-GCD-Awards-announcement.pdf>



Meet Council Member Betty Davidson

by Claudia Browner



Betty Davidson, Ph.D. is a St. Louis resident who started working with students with impairments in high school and knew she wanted to become a special education teacher. Her first teaching position was at a school in St. Louis City called Michael School for Crippled Children. She knew in 1970 that special education needed to change and even the name of the school had to go.

Betty started teaching college in 1975 and continued until 2016. She was a director in a college and realized that she missed being with children with disabilities. She became principal at Missouri School for the Blind and then became Deputy Director of Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind in Jefferson City. She retired from working for the state and became the supervisor for students with visual and physical impairments for Special School District in St. Louis in 2004 and loves her job even today.

Betty Davidson is currently the chair of the Transportation Subcommittee of the Missouri Governor's Council on Disability. She is on the St. Louis Disability Transportation Resource Network, the St. Louis Transition Council, the Missouri State Deafblind Advisory Committee, and the St. Louis Deafblind Task Force since 2004. She works with the Starkloff Disability Institute on the Dream Big Program. She works with the International Association for the Rehabilitation for the Blind and will serve as the Chair of the Leadership Division. She will be the President of the Missouri Association of the Rehabilitation for the Blind and prepare for the national convention in St. Louis in 2020. Betty works with Variety the Children's Charity of St. Louis and was President of Variety Women. She was President of Home Services Inc. of St. Louis and President of Zonta Club of St. Louis. Betty has received numerous awards and her latest was the Special School District Lasting Impression Award this spring.

Betty is very proud of her 2 children and her 5 grandchildren. Her son, Brent, followed in her vision footsteps as an ophthalmologist in St. Louis and Farmington and he is planning to help set up a vision clinic in Honduras. Her daughter, Michelle, is a journalist, TV host, screen writer, actress, and producer and has written and produced pieces on disabilities.

Betty stated, "I'm honored to be on the Governor's Council on Disability as it gives us the opportunity to serve all people with disabilities in our state."

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D, Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Todd Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Christina Brazell, Administrative Office Support Assistant
- Claudia Browner Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Disability Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Disability Program Specialist

Working Works

By Claudia Browner

The US Department of Labor/Office of Disability Employment Policy has launched its newest campaign – Working Works



Working Works. It lets people earn a living and contribute their skills and experience. For some, it may also be about pursuing a passion, taking on new challenges or being part of a team.

PSA Working Works (open captioned):

<https://youtu.be/nlopcSrlz1E>

PSA Working Works (audio introduced):

<https://youtu.be/HFRdPIP8TKs>

Through the voices of several individuals, the "Working Works" PSA explores the many reasons people work, including after injury or illness. The PSA's four primary cast members include Major League Baseball great Cal Ripken, Jr. and three other individuals who worked with their employers and health-care professionals to make a plan to stay at or return to work following illness or injury. Their stories emphasize the importance of working together on effective stay-at-work/return-to-work strategies—for the benefit of individuals, families, employers and the nation.

For more information, please visit <https://whatcanyoudocampaign.org/>

VR Summer Work Experience Program

By Claudia Browner

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Summer Work Experience Program is a work-based learning experience in a competitive integrated setting for students with disabilities and is provided in collaboration with approved Missouri VR Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs). It is a six week, paid program with up to 20 hours per week; sixteen hours are spent on tasks associated with the summer job and the remaining 4 hours are dedicated to soft skills training facilitated by the CRP.

Qualified participants are students entering their final year of high school who have no prior successful paid work experience in a competitive integrated setting.

In 2018, 700 students and 203 employers participated in the program and 73 students were offered a job.

[Click here to watch a video](#) about the Summer Work Experience Program. For more information, contact your local [Vocational Rehabilitation office](#).

Upcoming Events

- January 9, 2019 Missouri Legislative Session begins (100th General Assembly)
- March 15-22, 2019 Legislative Spring Break
- April 1-2, 2019 [Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo](#), Columbia
- May 17, 2019 Last day of Missouri Legislative Session
- July 16-20, 2019 [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#), MU Campus, Columbia